

Message Text

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ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 DODE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

/019 W

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R 131235Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO COMUSMACTHAI BANGKOK

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 8465

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 3378

E.O. 11652: GDS 83

TAGS: MOPS, OVIP, TH

SUBJ: VISITS TO THAILAND BY DOD PERSONNEL

1. THE PERIOD IMMEDIATELY AHEAD, EVERY EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE TO HOLD OFFICIAL VISITS BY DOD PERSONNEL TO THAILAND TO AN ABSOLUTE MINIMUM.

2. ALTHOUGH NEGOTIATIONS ARE NOW IN PROGRESS WITH THE RTG CONCERNING THE U.S. RESIDUAL PRESENCE, THESE NEGOTIATIONS ARE MOVING VERY SLOWLY AND A NUMBER OF MATTERS HAVE NOT YET EVEN BEEN DISCUSSED, LET ALONE SETTLED. FOR EXAMPLE, WE DO NOT YET KNOW WHAT THE THAI POSITION WILL BE ON CLEARANCE PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED IN CONNECTION WITH OFFICIAL VISITORS TO U.S. USED INSTALLATIONS, ALL OF WHICH WILL BE AT LEAST NOMINALLY UNDER THAI COMMAND ON MARCH 20.

3. IT SEEMS CERTAIN THAT WHEN MARCH 20 ARRIVES, THERE WILL BE A GREAT DEAL OF INTEREST ON THE PART OF THE THAI PUBLIC AND PRESS, AS WELL AS THE FOREIGN PRESS HERE, IN WHAT U.S. ACTIVITIES REMAIN. WE WILL WANT AT THAT TIME TO ATTRACT AS LITTLE ATTENTION AS POSSIBLE, PROJECTING THE IMAGE OF A VERY SMALL PRESENCE WITHIN THAI INSTALLATIONS.

4. THE SITUATION IS FURTHER COMPLICATED BY THE FACT THAT
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THAILAND WILL BE HOLDING NATIONAL ELECTIONS ON APRIL 4, AND

THE CAMPAIGN WILL BE IN FULL SWING ON MARCH 20. VISITS BY DOD PERSONNEL DURING THE PERIOD THAT LIES AHEAD WILL THEREFORE NOT ONLY ATTRACT UNDESIRED ATTENTION TO THE U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE HERE, BUT COULD ALSO(ESPECIALLY IN THE CASE OF VIP'S) GIVE RISE TO CHARGES OF INTERFERENCE IN THE THAI ELECTORAL PROCESS, OR AFTER THE ELECTIONS, IN THE GOVERNMENT FORMATION PROCESS, HOWEVER UNWARRANTED SUCH CHARGES WOULD BE.

5. FOR THESE REASONS, IT IS IMPORTANT THAT ONLY THE MOST OPERATIONALLY ESSENTIAL VISITS BY DOD PERSONNEL BE MADE TO THAILAND. IN THIS CATEGORY WOULD FALL, FOR EXAMPLE, A VISIT BY A TECHNICIAN , WITH SKILLS NOT AVAILABLE IN THAILAND, TO REPAIR MISSION-ESSENTIAL PIECE OF EQUIPMENT. OTHER KINDS OF VISITS, INCLUDING INSPECTIONS, ORIENTATIONS, STAFF VISITS, AND THE LIKE, SHOULD BE AVOIDED.

6. FOR WORKING PURPOSES, THE ABOVE GUIDELINES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS TAKING EFFECT ON MARCH 1, 1976 AND EXTENDING THROUGH MAY 31, 1976, BY WHICH TIME WE HOPE TO HAVE A CLEARER PICTURE ON THE BASIS OF WHICH TO REVIEW PROCEDURES.

7. HOLDERS OF BLANKET CLEARANCES SHOULD CONSIDER THAT THESE EXPIRE ON MARCH 1. THE QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT BLANKET CLEARANCES CAN BE GIVEN IN THE FUTURE WILL HAVE TO BE DECIDED AT A LATER TIME. IF A BLANKED CLEARANCE HOLDER NEEDS TO MAKE A VISIT AFTER MARCH 1 UNDER THE CRITERIA SET FORTH IN PARAGRAPH 5, ABOVE, A SPECIFIC CLEARANCE REQUEST SHOULD BE SUBMITTED.

8. A FDW SPECIFIC VISITS FOR DATES AFTER MARCH1 HAVE ALREADY BEEN GIVEN COUNTRY CLEARANCE. THESE MAY PROCEED ON SCHEDULE.

9. REQUEST YOU DISSEMINATE THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS MESSAGE TO INTERESTED MILITRY HEADQUARTERS.
WHITEHOUSE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, VISITS, MILITARY PLANS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BANGKO03378
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760056-0824
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760253/aaaabtsv.tel
Line Count: 96
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION PM
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07 JUN 2004 by GarlanWA>; APPROVED <07 JUN 2004 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: VISITS TO THAILAND BY DOD PERSONNEL
TAGS: MOPS, OVIP, TH
To: n/a
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006